

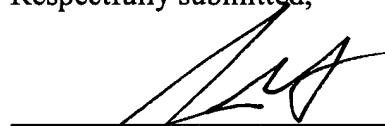
**REMARKS**

In the Office Action of December 17, 2003, independent Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over a proposed modification to U.S. Patent No. 6,058,047 to Kikuchi, and dependent Claim 18 and all other independent claims were allowed. To expedite the prosecution of this application, Applicants have amended independent Claim 9 to include the element in allowed dependent Claim 18 and have cancelled dependent Claim 18. Applicants have also amended various dependent claims to make them consistent with this amendment. With this amendment, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance.

If there are any questions concerning this Amendment, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at (312) 321-4719.

Dated: April 28, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

  
Joseph F. Hetz  
Reg. No. 41,070  
Attorney for Applicants

BRINKS HOFER  
GILSON & LIONE  
P.O. Box 10395  
Chicago, Illinois 60610  
(312) 321-4719